Air Gabon Renews its Fleet with all Boeing Airplanes

The Flag Carrier of Gabon is the first airline in the region to announce plans to renew its entire fleet with new Boeing Next-Generation 737-700, 747-400 Combi, and 767-300ER airplanes. Upon delivery of its new Boeing airplanes, the airline will operate one of the youngest fleets in the world.

"The renewal of Air Gabon's fleet is part of a complete economic, financial, technical and commercial strategy undertaken by its shareholders", said Emmanuel Nze-Bekale, chairman of Air Gabon. "The new planes will allow the company to regain and extend its market share in a more and more competitive environment."

Implementation of the plan began earlier this year with the interim leases of a 737-400 and a 737-300 from CIT Leasing Corporation, making Gabon the first airline in Central and West Africa to initiate its fleet replacement. This phase of the plan adds two 737-700s, one 747-400 Combi, and one 767-300ER, with deliveries scheduled to begin in 2003.

"Air Gabon is operating in an important, emerging area of the world," said Doug Groseclose, vice president of International Sales for Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "We are pleased to be a part of Air Gabon's success, and we look forward to contributing to the airline's continued success."

This new fleet renewal and expansion will make Air Gabon a leader in the 21st century with a family of airplanes that deliver the best value to its customers.

Chairman Nze-Bekale said the 747-400 Combi, 767-300 and 737-700s fulfill three objectives for Air Gabon:

- To provide quality, comfort and a positive image to its clients
- To homogenize the structure of its fleet, and
- To fully engage the operational qualifications of our pilots and ground crews.

"With a redesigned service, a new fleet, a new marketing plan and a reinforced technical partnership, Air Gabon is actively preparing for its place in the Third Millennium by responding to a changing and ever more demanding market," Chairman Nze-Bekale said.

Air Gabon was designated a national carrier in 1968. In May 1977, Gabon withdrew from the Air Afrique consortium and began operating its own international services from West Africa with a fleet of new Boeing airplanes. The airline currently operates a 747-200 Combi, a 767-200ER, a 727-200 and a 737-200 on an extensive network of passenger and cargo services between West Africa, South Africa and international destinations including Rome, London, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Nice, Marseille and Paris, France. They also serve an extensive network within Africa to Johannesburg, Douala, Lome, Abidjan, Cotonou, Bamako, Abidjan, Dakar, Malabo, Bangui, Kinshasa, Pointe Noire and Lagos.

The 737-700 can fly up to 3,260 nautical miles (6,040 kilometers), the farthest of the four Next-Generation 737 models. It offers superior reliability and maintainability and features an all-new, spacious 777-style interior. The Next-Generation 737 is the newest design and most technologically advanced family of airplanes in the single-aisle market, featuring an all-new wing and updated liquid-crystal displays in the flight deck.

The 767-300ER can fly up to 6,115 nautical miles (11,320 km), offering the lowest operating cost per trip of any widebody airplane, and is one of the most popular twin-aisle airplanes ever built. More than 800 767s are in service with 80 operators around the world.

The Boeing 747-400 Combi has helped airlines around the world meet their long-range passenger and cargo requirements. The Combi has a large side-cargo door behind the left wing, with the capability to replace passenger seats with cargo containers in the aft portion of the airplane. This flexibility allows airlines to adapt the interior configuration to meet variations in seasonal markets and charter demands.

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